

# Earth First!

No. 47 March 1998

*Now is the hour to get violent with your telly, fly into the streets and create carnival and festival.....*

## HOUSEBUILDERS' HQ FIELD DAY

On 2nd February a group of EF!ers and friends occupied the offices of the House Builders Federation(HBF), which lobbies for building commuter houses on greenbelt land rather than the provision of social housing.

Armed only with their wits and sets of Oligopoly (a Monopoly type board game based on the exploits of the HBF) the group attempted to obtain previously undisclosed info such as a list of HBF members; an explanation for why 3 of the directors have given the HBF office address as their home address (in breach of the Companies Act 1985); and details of the amount of acreage of greenbelt in 'land banks' held by HBF members.

Various filing cabinets were investigated and a meeting in the company's board room was interrupted: a rather keen secretary tried to keep protestors out but succeeded in locking three of them in the room with the Chief Executive. While this was going on inside, musicians outside performed alternative versions of their favourite chart-topping tunes, including the Verve's 'The Plans Won't Work' - 'All this talk of building homes / It's bringing me down my love / Like a flat for a prat, in a new town, upon

an English down.'

Although no arrests were made everyone was searched on their way out of the building. The action got significant media coverage, especially in the construction trade press.

Other excursions by this happy band of appalling lyricists are planned. Contact 01865 721366

Meanwhile, in a field near Bradford, activists from Leeds EF! brought work on the greenfield housing development at Sandy Lane in Bradford to a six hour halt by climbing onto the only working digger. Security guards were notable by their absence,

relations with workers were good and there were no arrests. One resident commented "Most people round here are in total support of this kind of action, it's our only option left".

Residents have been taking direct action against the construction of the 92 Bryant Homes since work started including squatting the access to the site, locking the access gates and diverting a stream back across the work site. Those involved are hoping to broaden their campaign to take in other greenbelt housing developments. Contact the Sandy Lane housing campaign on 01274 495264.



## BREWERY FIELDS ARRUGA!

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## BREWERY FIELDS ARRUGA!

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Brewery Fields is a 30 acre greenfield site, containing woodland, meadow, marsh and heathland and has not been ploughed for over 40 years. The site is owned by Gwynedd Council but has been used as recreation space by locals for decades. They have been campaigning against the development for six years: the only reason that the Council is proceeding is that the land was designated for development in the 1950s.

Last year an application to turn the land into a Town Green was rejected, despite the fact that it was shown to have been used daily by residents as a green for over thirty years. For directions or information contact the site mobile on 0836 563980 or office on 01248 388017/8 or fax the camp on 01286 871874.

## X MARKS THE SPOT

To highlight the risk of genetic pollution protestors visited an AgrEvo oilseed rape test site in Scotland this month. The group, a bunch of gnomes called The Human GeneGnome Project, painted a large red X across the field before signing the nearby road with placards declaring the area a 'biohazard'.

"It's time you humans woke up to the dangers of this technology," said a spokesspinner. "AgrEvo have been reluctant to divulge the location of this dangerous experiment. If they won't let the human people know, then we will do it for them. The inhabitants of Fife, human and gnome alike, have a right to know that this crop will pollute the environment while the long-term results are unknown."

Gnome Chomsky added, "The only people who can possibly benefit from GM crops are the multinational biotech companies like AgrEvo and Monsanto - they wish to commodify

and control the means of production of food simply in the interests of profit."

The Human GeneGnome Project is hoping that while letters to MPs and polite phone calls don't work, a bunch of gnomes may be taken seriously. Contact the gnomes c/o Fife EF! (see contacts list) or direct through any fairy ring.

## IT'S MAIZE JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT!

The three French farmers who destroyed 5 tons of Novartis genetically engineered Bt maize seed (see French Farmers Destroy GE Maize in Jan AU) have been sentenced: two of them to eight months suspended imprisonment, one to five months, and all to pay Novartis FF 500.000 damages. It is not yet clear whether they will appeal the decision or agree to pay Novartis.



One of the 3 included this in his account to the court:

*"Today, I am.....accused of committing a serious crime according to the law. The alleged crime is: the destruction of sacks of genetically modified maize. Yes, this is serious, and that's why I assume full responsibility for it.....I believe in the ability of everyone to act as an individual. There is no place in our trade union for a hierarchy of responsibility.....The strength of our union movement rests on this determination to mobilise free individuals who accept all the consequences of their acts knowing fully the motive for them. Yes, on the 8th of January I participated in the destruction of genetically modified maize, which was*

*stored in Novartis's grain silos in Nérac. (And the only regret I have now, is that I wasn't able to destroy more of it.). I knew that by acting in this way I was doing something illegal. But it was necessary, and we had no other choice. The way in which genetically modified agricultural products have been imposed on European countries didn't leave us with any alternative. When was there a public debate on genetically modified organisms? When were farmers and consumers asked what they think about this? Never. The decisions have been taken at the level of the World Trade Organisation, and state machinery complies with the law of market forces.....A democratic debate simply doesn't exist.....Everything has to be allowed to continue in silence. By appearing before you today, I'm aware of being in breach of the law which wants every citizen to be content with expressing her or his views by simply putting their vote in the urn every six years.....Yes, this action was illegal, but I lay claim to it because it was legitimate. I don't demand clemency, but justice. Either we have acted in everyone's interest and you will acquit us, or we have shaken the establishment and in that case you will punish us. There is no other issue."*

Contact <[confpays@globenet.org](mailto:confpays@globenet.org)>, fax: + 33 1 436 8003

## GERROFF MY STREET

The recent pro-hunting Countryside March did not go off entirely as planned - the frequency on which it's 'March FM' was broadcasting for the day was hijacked by a group called the Hunt Sabs Broadcasting Corporation. These drowned out the Countryside Alliance's signal with their own and replaced the pro-hunting station with a DJ shouting 'Fuck off our land! Now!'

An undisclosed 4-figure sum was paid for the day's radio licence it was intended to broadcast speeches by various pro-hunt landowners. All attending were encouraged to tune in - those that did were treated to London's finest acid-house together with some words from our sponsor.

## THE RIGHT TO ROAM 28 / 29 March & DIGGERS' DAY 1st April

Mass Trespass in commemoration of the Diggers movement. Meet 1pm Luton Station. At 1.30 coaches will take people to a mystery destination to trespass and make camp for the evening. The weekend will include speakers, music, special guests, festivities and feasting. Bring tents, musical instruments, banners and food to share. Site details will be available on 01865 722016 or 0402 176410 from the Saturday so that anyone can join in over the weekend. Contact TLIO on 01865 722016 or email [office@tlio.demon.co.uk](mailto:office@tlio.demon.co.uk) so that they can get the coaches to fit the numbers. Diggers Day will be a joint The Land Is Ours and Advisory Service for Squatters day of respect for Winstanley and those nonviolent direct action pioneers of 1649. There will be a reflective chat and ramble in Weybridge, Surrey. Contact 0171 359 5185 or 0117 8224391

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EFIAU, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M11NW. 0161 224 48 46 - Email: [actionupdate@gn.apc.org](mailto:actionupdate@gn.apc.org) - You can subscribe via Email for free - EF! Website: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/ef/earthfirst.html>



## NEWS IN BRIEF

Do or Die hits the streets this March - 164 pages, £2.50 (inc p&p), \$6 overseas. This compilation of voices from activists within EF! comes highly recommended. "We almost killed ourselves and each other doing it, so we think it's quite good" Contact South Downs EF! (see contacts list)

Leeds EF! and 'Spirit of Freedom' (Earth Liberation Prisoners) share a web site <http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/3081/11.html>

Hillfort EF! has new contact details (see list). They are focussing on campaigns against the A350 and for Siston Common in Bristol

Acme Tat Supplies has produced a catalogue of its wares, featuring cut price climbing gear alongside essential publications.

Acme Tat was set up by activists in response to their needs on campaigns such as the Third Battle of Newbury. Contact 0113 2629365 or e-mail [cornerstone@gn.apc.org](mailto:cornerstone@gn.apc.org)

Two Gandalf defendants are due in court from the 27th April on charges of "conspiracy to incite persons unknown". To publicise the plight of the three journalists already in prison and to draw attention to their trial the two are doing a national tour. See 'Events' for locations.

Apologies for a mistake in a web address in the January issue <[www.cafeunderground.com/cafesite/rooms/ozymandia/handbook\\_1.html](http://www.cafeunderground.com/cafesite/rooms/ozymandia/handbook_1.html)> is what it said. The correct address is <[www.cafeunderground.com/Cafesite/Rooms/Ozymandia/handbook\\_1.html](http://www.cafeunderground.com/Cafesite/Rooms/Ozymandia/handbook_1.html)>

Dead Woman's Bottom latest: all charges from the eviction have been dropped: it was found to be in breach of Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Protestors are now gathering before a 140 mile walk to the Home Office. Sporadic digger-diving and ribbon-dressing is still happening as the building of the road continues. Contact 01749-880144

Undercurrents, the video activist outfit is back on the contact list following talk about the relationship between them and activists. These issues take time to resolve and though our discussions were positive there is still a range of views on the matter.

Faslane Peace Camp is in court on 1st April for an eviction hearing. 80% of Scots are opposed to Trident. People are needed on site and on the phone tree. Contact 01436 820901.

A network is taking shape to stop CASTOR arriving at Sellafield for re-processing, in solidarity with protests in Germany. It arrives on average every 6 weeks - for more info call 01706 812663, or e-mail [peacehouse@gn.apc.org](mailto:peacehouse@gn.apc.org).

## DERBY DEFIANCE

Derby residents set up a city centre camp in February after plans to develop one of their few green spaces were revealed. The area, Bass Recreation Park and Mill Fleam, was donated to the people of Derby in 1876 with more land being given by the Bass brewery in the 70s. It is now used as a public open space and a grade 1 wildlife site. Despite this, the City Council and developers Norwest Holst intend to bulldoze through the area for a filter road and roundabout. Plans extend to demolishing the existing bus station to build a shopping centre in its place. A new bus station with space for half as many buses is to be built on an area currently used as a small ornamental water garden.

There are already 20 people on site with tree houses being put up and donations made from day one. A local TV company ran a vox pop which concluded that for every 2 residents in support of the road there were 8(!) against. Apparently the Bass brewery are also not particularly happy about the proposed development: whilst they are trying to create more public parks for the millennium they don't want the ones they've already given trashed. Climbers and support needed - contact Derby Friends of the Earth on 01332 727237 or Nottingham EF! (see contacts list).

## THE ACTION UPDATE NEEDS YOU -

MANCHESTER EF! HAS PRODUCED THE AU FOR OVER A YEAR NOW AND, DUE TO OTHER COMMITMENTS, ARE MAKING THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE AU THEIR FINAL ONE. THIS MEANS THAT UNLESS ANOTHER GROUP TAKES ON THE AU, IT GOES DORMANT. CAN YOU HELP? HANDOVER AND TRAINING PROVIDED.

CONTACT EF! AU 0161 224 4846.

## CHAIN GANG IN OIL PLANT DEMO

Travelling along the approach road to the Coryton BP oil refinery in Essex, a group of daytrippers were so appalled at the sight that they blocked the road. Minutes later their cars were straddling both lanes and 2

badgers. The badgers were evicted but have recently re-occupied their sett and need some support to keep possession.

Detailed directions to the camp are available - contact 0467 430211 or 0117 9393039 or look it up on the campaign website: <http://www.gn.apc.org/cycling/ashtoncourt>.

## OXFORD RECLAIMED

Around 200 cyclists reclaimed Oxford's streets recently to draw attention to the city's pollution and accident rate. They cycled around the historic streets accompanied by a rave rickshaw playing dance music, and the local constabulary themselves on bicycles and motorbikes.

One arrest was made for hopscotch on the High Street - held to be an obstruction of the highway.

## KINGSTON EVICTION

The application for felling trees at Canbury Gardens, Kingston was signed on 17th March. Protesters are now waiting for the forces of darkness to evict them.

The trees on both sides of the narrow park have rope walkways connecting them plus simple treehouses, banners and so on. According to one visitor the most impressive structure is a rickety tower, designed to topple if any of the trees that it is connected to by ropes and walkways is cut down. It's constructed completely of nailed-together bits of wood, is about forty feet high and painted as a medieval tower. Attached to it on one side are letters from children who have visited the camp.

Directions from Kingston railway station: turn right out of the station, walk along the footpath, over a bridge, turn right into an underpass under the railway. Turn left immediately after to head straight for the river. Canbury Gardens is on the right as you reach the Thames.

## G8 ACTIONS COMING UP

This May (15th - 17th) heads of state of the eight most industrialised countries will converge on Birmingham to discuss globalisation. They will be joined by the leaders of the World Bank, the UN, IMF and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Although the meeting has no policy making structure it defines issues that will set global agendas and dominate economic thinking for the coming year. After Birmingham the G8 posse will fly to Geneva to sign the latest offering of neo-liberal 'free' trade from the WTO.

Global Days of Action are planned during the G8 summit - raising key social and ecological issues and challenging the right of the G8 to take decisions that affect the world. To the activists descending upon Birmingham watch this space.

## WEST COUNTRY GETS

## EVENTS

### MARCH

- 20-27 Faslane Peace Camp's Spring Greening Festival. Contact 01436 820901
- 23-27 Put British Aerospace and the British government on trial. Stop the Hawk Deal vigil whilst 6 East Timorese exiles and 3 peace activists are in court. Magistrates Court, Lytham. Contact 0151 264 8741
- 26 Stop logging in the Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia. Action near London. Contact Forest Action Network 0171 602 5889
- 26 Anniversary Day of Action on Huntingdon Life Science laboratories. Contact 0589 026435
- 28-29 Mass Trespass in commemoration of the Diggers movement. Contact 01865 722016 or 0402 176410

### APRIL

- 1 The first ever Diggers' Day commemoration. Contact 0117 8224391
- 1 Faslane Peace Camp in court - climax of the year long siege. Contact 01436 820901
- 3-5 Gathering Visions, Gathering Strength II, Manchester University. Contact 0161 834 8301
- 6-17 GANDALF LIBERATION TOUR visiting: Lancaster, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Oxford, Guildford, Portsmouth, Brighton & Big London climax. Contact 0956 694922
- 9-16 International Animal Rights Gathering, Netherlands. Contact in UK 01424 430503
- 10-11 Love and Rockets Action. 12 noon, Bristol Bus Station Car Park. Workshops on 'the social city' and excellent action (to be announced). Contact Bristol EF! 0117 9393093.
- 11-13 A weekend of nonviolent resistance to British Aerospace sales of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. Easter faith and resistance gathering.. all welcome. Contact 0151 264 8741
- 11-13 Norman Invasion and picnic at 2nd Battle of Hastings anti-road site. Contact The 2nd Battle of Hastings Coalition 01424 719671
- 18-19 Hammers & Spanners: exploring a ploughshares approach to environmental action, Oxford. Contact 0161 226 2996
- 18 World Day for Lab Animals, Hillgrove Farm, Dry Lane, Witney. Meet 1pm, at the gate.
- 18 Save the Green Belt Rally 11am, Stevenage. Contact 0171 566 1698.
- 18 Bike action, Oldham. Contact Oldham EF!
- 25 Cambridge RTS, 1pm railway station.

### MAY

- 1-4 Mayday 98 Gathering - breaking down barriers, avoiding dogmas and kickstarting the revolutionary movement. Contact 0117 907 3667, PO Box HH57, Leeds LS8
- 9 Wolverhampton RTS.
- 15-17 G8 summit, Birmingham. Contact Manchester EF! 0161 224 4846.
- 16 Global Street Party - Contact RTS 0171 281 4621
- 30 No Opencast action. More info to follow. Contact 0181 767 3142 or 0181 672 9698

### JUNE

- 14-16 Euro Summit in Cardiff. Contact Reclaim Europe! 0171 272 9333 [Europ@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:Europ@globalnet.co.uk)
- 13-20 Nottingham Green Transport Week. Contact Nottingham EF! 0115 9585666
- 10 McLibel Anniversary Day of Action. Contact McLibel Support Campaign 0171 713 1269

Germany. If you are in the UK, please call 01706 812663, or e-mail [peacehouse@gn.apc.org](mailto:peacehouse@gn.apc.org).

Protestors at the Birmingham Northern Relief Road camp recently took a squat on route - the official notice to quit was served almost immediately and court proceedings are underway. Contact 0797 0301978

**THE PRELIMINARY ORGANISING MEETING FOR THE 1998 EF! SUMMER GATHERING WENT WELL WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ATTENDING. INPUT FROM THOSE WHO DIDN'T MANAGE TO MAKE IT IS STILL WELCOME - THE NEXT MEETING IS ON MONDAY APRIL 6TH. CONTACT LEEDS EF! 0113 2629365 IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.**

## CAMPS

Birmingham Northern Relief Road 0797 0301978, Derby tree camp 01332 727237 email [tims@bear.demon.co.uk](mailto:tims@bear.demon.co.uk), Ashton Court Quarry 0117 9393093, Bingley relief road scheme 01274 504626, Kebele squat 0117 9399469, Faslane 01436 820901, Brewery road in Bury St Edmunds 01359 240365, Teddy Bear bypass 0468 221454, Radstock Railway 01761 432273, Lyminge Forest 01303 265737, Alvis Factory peace camp 01926 338805, Aldermaston peace camp 0117 9393746, Menwith Hill womens peace camp 01943 468593

## PRISONERS

3 year prison sentences from Nov 97 handed out to the 'Gandalf 3' for reporting on direct action: 'conspiracy to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage' Saxon Burchnall-Wood CK4322 (NB new address) HMP Send, Ripley Road, Woking, Surrey GU23 7LJ Steve Booth CK 4323, HMP Lancaster, Lancaster Castle, Lancaster LA1 1YL. Noel Molland CK4321, HMP Channings Wood, Denbury, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 GDW

12 months for charges relating to the protest against the second runway at Manchester Airport John Davies (CH4539) (release date 17th April); Ian Williamson (CH5067), HMP Altcourse, Fazakerley, Liverpool, L9 7LH

BP oil refinery in Essex, a group of daytrippers were so appalled at the sight that they blocked the road. Minutes later their car was straddling both lanes and 2 citizens were attached to the underside of the vehicle. Banners appeared reading *Oiling the World's Ills* and *Tax Oil Now*, a reference to the lenient treatment of the oil industry by government (the UK's tax regime for oil exploration is beaten only by southern Ireland worldwide for its perks). The tax message was particularly apt as the following day Gordon Brown failed to crack down on this over-subsidised energy source. "It's a clear case of corporate welfare before social welfare," said a spokesperson for the protestors. "In the budget we saw the Government pandering to some of the world's richest companies, whilst attacking single mothers, disabled and unemployed."

Very soon the approach road was backed up for at least three miles, with over 100 tankers unable to enter the refinery. The citizens, calling themselves 'UKOOA', or UK Oil Overthrow Association (accidentally echoing the UK Offshore Operators Association) insisted on meeting with the refinery manager to discuss their demands: the shutting down of Coryton and a bottle of organic champagne.

When the manager arrived, there was a 'full and frank exchange of views' between him and the two tucked beneath the car, although he was not delighted to negotiate with the two pairs of shoes sticking out. Eventually the police stepped in and arrested the five unattached citizens for obstruction of the highway. Essex' finest then returned with the largest pair of boltcroppers they could find, intending to liberate the remaining two. But the copper's croppers proved unequal to the task. At which point the fire brigade were called out.

Coryton's only approach road was inaccessible for over two hours, and BP was in the dock on the day its annual report hit shareholders' doorsteps.

## ASHTON COURT

The camp at Ashton Court Quarry is moving into a new phase of activity as work on the site is likely to start any day.

The camp was set up as a focus for the protest against the expansion of Durnford Quarry into Ashton Court, a public park near Bristol. The park was bought by the city council in 1959 who have leased 20 acres at the top end of the estate to Pioneer Aggregates, an Australian multinational. Pioneer want to expand the Quarry, and have been given planning permission, against the wishes of local people.

This will destroy 20 acres which currently supports a diverse habitat.

Part of the land to be dug up includes a wildflower meadow that Pioneer is proposing replanting on another field, half a mile away, which is inhabited by

(contd top of next column)

## WEST COUNTRY GETS IT TOGETHER!!

On 21st February around 150 people attended the West Country Activist Gathering. The day started with introductions to campaigns going on in the south west, ranging from anti-quarrying to Zapatista support. Four sets of workshops in the afternoon covered Building the West Country Activist Network, Environmental Ploughshares, The Land Is Ours, and a workshop on general issues arising from local direct action. The aim of the gathering was to bring together campaigners in the west to create a stronger support network.

There are vague plans for another event some time at the end of the summer. Contact the West Country Activist Network Newsletter, PO Box 426, BATH BA1 2ZD

## WOMEN TAKE POLICE BOAT

On 13th March four women walked undetected inside RNAD Coulport, checking on the presence of nuclear materials, before finding an unattended police launch and requisitioning it for their lawful peace work. Driving past a security guard in the watchtower about the jetty where Trident submarines have their warheads loaded, the women drove the inflatable right up to an open hanger. After 30 minutes inspection they decided to check on Trident submarines at Faslane. After passing at least four other police inflatables and launches they reached Faslane and were spotted as they raced by the naval berths trying to find a way to the submarines.

Although the women were arrested no charges have been brought so far.

## ZAPATISTA PICKET

The Mexican government was blamed for the massacre at Acteal in Chiapas by a recent picket outside its Embassy in London. A large banner reading 'Murderers' was stretched along crash barriers. Naming the ruling party, the crowd chanted, 'PBI, asesinos!' They demanded 'Fuera tropas de Chiapas' (troops out of Chiapas)

The Ambassador declined the invitation to come outside, but an Embassy official invited a small delegation to meet him inside. Four delegates were led to his office and made brief statements. He undertook to convey their concerns to the Mexican government, but gave no clear answer to their questions. According to the Ambassador the government is searching for a peaceful solution, but he would not explain why they still renege on the San Andres Accords. Contact 0181-679 6930

Nottingham EF! 0115 9585666  
19 McLibel Anniversary Day of Action. Contact  
McLibel Support Campaign 0171 713 1269

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# DOING TIME

*"Under a government which also imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison."*

Henry David Thoreau

An increasing state reaction to nonviolent direct action is to attempt to control activists through physical imprisonment. Prison has the potential to be an effective deterrent but does not necessarily have to be so. Some activists see punishment as the most important part of civil disobedience, as it is the fear of personal consequences that often prevents us from stopping violence and creating a more just society. The function of punishment - to make citizens internalise control so that they become their own jailers - can be made to lose its effect, according to Per Hørmgren. Whether or not this is the case, while prison is a possible consequence of our actions as Earth First!, through non-payment of fines or other activity, it is important to demystify the institution through information and preparation.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

"Those arrested as a result of nonviolent direct action have the advantage over most prisoners of knowing that they are there having made a degree of conscious choice; this knowledge can provide a degree of strength.

Being in prison can give a rounded view of the oppressive society against which we struggle in nonviolent resistance - this may be apparent not just in the organisational systems of prison but in the inmates themselves - a significant number of people are poor and/or in prison for poverty related crime.

Prison is a lonely place. It aims to weaken solidarity, to try to isolate people from one another and reduce one's concentration to dealing with the demands of authority and of one's survival.

Entering prison is like going into another culture - new behaviour norms, language, symbols, new reality. You can expect some overcrowding, frustrating and irritating levels of noise and distraction and little personal space or privacy. It may be difficult to sleep, there may be radios and TVs, slamming bars and loud arguments. Time will be distorted: days will slip by but each hour may seem like an eternity. Food will be starchy and dull. You will learn to wait, for a phone call, a shower, a meal, the answer to a question, the time of day.

The warders in prison have a great deal of power and they are aware of this. Long exposure to prison, whether as a prisoner or a guard, tends to have a corrosive effect on one's confidence in humanity, and the warders are victims of this as well. They expect the worst out of people and are not often disappointed. Their principal concern is to preserve order, which demands an atmosphere of unquestioning respect (fear) for authority. This is their contribution to the process of 'rehabilitation', supplanting personal responsibility with thoughtless obedience and submission. Try not to indulge them in their exalted self image - expect that they should act with respect and compassion whilst remembering that you and they have different jobs to perform. Let them be responsible for keeping order while you are responsible for keeping your conscience.

Just because your body is detained doesn't mean you've got to turn in your conscience and convictions along with your other belongings. Whether in prison or not, the freedom we enjoy is always the freedom we claim for ourselves. Being under lock and key does not deprive you of your essential freedom as long as you continue to insist on your power to say 'yes' or 'no' within the limits of whatever situation you find yourself. It was your commitment to make decisions for yourself about what you should and shouldn't do that landed you in prison in the first place and it remains a good principle to live by."

(Based on 'Serving Time in Jail', the War Resisters League Handbook)

## FOOD

Different diets can be catered for upon request - a vegan diet is guaranteed for members of the Vegan Society (01424 427393) and may be available for others. In recent times some prisoners have gone on hunger strike to demand a diet free of genetically manipulated products. For more on this contact GM-Free Prisoner Support, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1

## LETTERS

*'While there is a soul in prison, I am not free'*

Eugene Debs

Writing letters is possibly the most important thing that you can do from the outside. Prison distances you from the 'real' world and a friendly letter breaks down that feeling. Remember that all letters are censored, so do not write anything that may jeopardise other actions or anyone else's freedom. Try and find other things to write about than just how great you think the person is and how you feel that you can't do as much. In the words of a prisoner, "Don't send me socks or sympathy. Send me a picture of yourself at the fence of a missile silo."

If you cannot think of what to write, send a card, postcard, picture or poem. Don't necessarily expect a reply as some prisons limit the amount of letters which can be sent out and in those which don't, the prisoner still has to buy stamps and envelopes.

## VISITS

Remand prisoners are normally allowed regular visits of one to three people (they all have to visit at the same time). Check in advance with the prisoner or their support rather than just turning up - not only will it be disappointing for the person expecting to visit, but as prison is a disorientating experience it can be distressing to expect one person only to see another.

Convicted prisoners are entitled to less regular visits.

## BOOKS, MONEY, FOOD, CASSETTES, OTHER CONSUMER GOODS

Regulations on these will vary - contact the Visitor's Centre at the particular prison for info.

## GENERAL SUPPORT

Action on the above and other aspects of prison can be arranged by supporters on the outside, often via the prisoner's solicitor. Support after prison is also essential.

"With the threat of prison hanging over my head I try and find out as much as I possibly can about the prison I am likely to be sent to...I worry about what the other prisoners are like, will I fit in, how much stuff I can take with me, will I be on my own or sharing...When I arrive different questions become a problem: where do I go to eat, to shower, where is everything, this place is big.

After you come out of prison, take a holiday, or rest, to give yourself time to adjust to being out again and having space to move about. Give yourself time and and tell others how you are feeling."

Tracy Hart

"Prisons and prison experiences vary enormously...The first time I went to a British prison was one of the most hellish weeks of my life: I was beaten up by the guards, denied a vegan diet, taken before the governor three times (and threatened with everything from the punishment block to the psychiatric wing) and put in a cell with someone in for murder and someone in for manslaughter. In contrast, much of my five months in another prison was a leisurely rest - badminton, jogging, table tennis, evening classes, my own cell, passable vegan food, friendly enough screws."

Stephen Hancock

## FURTHER INFO:

Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group (ALF SG), BCM 1160, London WC1N 3XX

Spirit of Freedom (Earth Liberation Prisoners), c/o BM HEAL, London WC1N 3XX

National Prisoner's Movement, BM-PROP, London WC1N 3XX 0181 542 3744

Women in Prison, c/o Women's Environmental Network 0171 247 3327

The Daily Hammer (newsletter of the Ploughshares Support Network), no.8 'special issue on prison', PSN, Box X, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford

Trident Ploughshares 2000 Handbook 01603 611953

Civil Disobedience, Henry David Thoreau, 1849

Any prisoner's diaries that you can get your hands on

# EF! CONTACTS MARCH '98

**Arun Valley EF!**  
c/o 1 York Rd  
Littlehampton, W. Sussex  
01903 721615  
[arunef@adcaliff.demon.co.uk](mailto:arunef@adcaliff.demon.co.uk)

**Bath EF!**  
P.O. Box 426  
Bath BA1 2ZD  
**01249 713742**

**Beal Valley Rescue**  
33 Valley Rise  
Rushcroft, Oldham,  
Lancashire OL2 7QF

**Blackburn EF!**  
12 Balmoral Road  
Darwen  
Lancs, BB3 2EW  
**01254 777079**

**Bristol EF!**  
c/o Box 51  
Greenleaf Bookshop  
82 Colston St  
Bristol BS1 5BB  
**0117 939 3093**

**Cambourne EF!**  
c/o Hartis Farm  
Copper Hill  
Troon, Cambourne  
Cornwall

**Cambridge EF!**  
Box E, 12 Mill Road,  
Cambridge

**Cardiff EF!**  
c/o Green Group  
Glamorgan Uni SU  
Pontypridd  
Mid-Glamorgan  
CF37 1DL

**Cardigan Bay EF!**  
Temperance House Taliesin  
Powys, Mid Wales

**Chichester EF!**  
c/o West Sussex Wildlife  
Protection, P.O. Box 3058  
Littlehampton  
W. Sussex BN16 3LG

**Fastlane Peace Camp**  
Shandon, Helensburgh  
Dunbartonshire  
Scotland G84 8HT  
**01436 820901**

**Fife EF!**  
c/o 91 South St  
St. Andrews, Fife KY16 9Q

**Forest Action Network**  
UK, 42-46 Bethel Street  
Norwich

**Norfolk NR2 1NR**  
**01603 611 953**  
Fax: 01603 666 879  
[fanuk@envirolink.org](mailto:fanuk@envirolink.org)  
<http://www.fanweb.org.uk>

**Glasgow EF!**  
PO Box 180,  
Glasgow G4 9AB

**Guildford EF!**  
PO Box 217  
Guildford, GU1 1WS  
Fax: 01483 203212

**Gwendraeth Valley EF!**  
Y Gymru Annibynnol  
24 Yr erw, Burry Port  
Carmar SA16 0DA

**Gwynedd & Mon EF!**  
Muddy Paradise, Tan-y-  
Coed Canol, Ceunant,  
Caernarfon, Gwynedd,  
LL55 4RN  
(01286) 871 874  
[afu01b@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:afu01b@bangor.ac.uk)

**Hereford EF!**  
58 Aylestone Hill  
Hereford HR11HX  
**01432 358618**

**Hillfort EF!**  
21 Tower Hill  
Dilton Marsh, Westbury  
Wiltshire BA13 4DA  
**01373 858106**

**Hull On Earth**  
c/o PO Box 33  
Hull HU1 1AA  
**01482 218377**

**LEAF**  
Box Z,  
13, Biddulph St.  
Leicester LE2 1BH  
Tel/Fax: 0116 255 3223

**Leeds EF!**  
16 Sholebrook Avenue  
Leeds LS7 3HB  
0113 262 9365  
[cornerstone@gn.apc.org](mailto:cornerstone@gn.apc.org)  
<http://www.geocities.com/>

**Rain Forest 3081/t1.html**

**Liverpool EF!**  
96 Bold Street  
Liverpool L1

**Lune EF!**  
c/o Bookcellar  
9 Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster, LA1 1TJ  
**01524 849 313**

**Manchester EF!**  
Dept 29, 1 Newton St  
Manchester M1 1HW  
Tel/Fax: 0161 224 4846  
[manef@mcadco.globalnet.co.uk](mailto:manef@mcadco.globalnet.co.uk)

**Deadwoman's Bottom**  
Protest Camp  
Nr Green Farm  
Chantry, Frome BA 11  
**01749 880144**

**Mid-Somerset EF!**  
PO Box 23  
5 High St, Glastonbury  
Somerset BA6 9PU

**Norfolk EF!**  
The Greenhouse  
42-46 Bethel St.  
Norwich NR2 1NR

**Nottingham EF!**  
c/o The Rainbow Centre  
182 Mansfield Road  
Nottingham NG1 3HW  
**0115 9585666**

**Oldham EF!**  
Dept 110, 1 Newton Street  
Manchester M1 1HW  
**0161 628 5128**

**Oxford EF!**  
Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd  
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

**REACT**  
6 Edinburgh Cr.  
Leamington Spa  
CV3 13LL

**Reclaim the Streets**  
PO BOX 9656  
London N4 4JY  
0171 281 4621  
[rts@gn.apc.org](mailto:rts@gn.apc.org)  
<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/rts.html>

**Reclaim the Valleys**  
c/o Swansea Environment  
Centre, Pier Street  
Swansea, SA1 1RY

**Save Lyminge Forest**  
Greensword  
The Spout House  
Lyminge  
Kent CT21 4LQ  
01303 265737  
Fax: 01233 720127

**Sheffield EF!**  
c/o Shefin  
201 Crookes Valley Rd

**Sheffield S10 1BA**  
0114 267 1200  
[bigoss@pine.shu.ac.uk](mailto:bigoss@pine.shu.ac.uk)

**South Devon EF!**  
Birdwood House  
44 High Street  
Totnes, Devon

**South Downs EF!**  
PO Box 2971  
Brighton BN2 2GY  
[savage@easynet.co.uk](mailto:savage@easynet.co.uk)  
<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/ef/>  
[earthfirst.html](http://earthfirst.html)

**Swansea People EF!**  
c/o Green Action  
Swansea University SU  
Swansea, Wales

**The Flat Oak Society**  
c/o 3 St Alphege Lane  
Canterbury  
Kent CT1 2EB  
**01227 463368**

**Upper Nene EF!**  
Box E,  
24 St. Michaels Avenue,  
Northampton NN1

**Warwick EF!**  
c/o Green Society  
Students Union  
University of Warwick  
Coventry CV4 7AL  
[suad@csv.warwick.ac.uk](mailto:suad@csv.warwick.ac.uk)

**Wolves Eco Action**  
c/o Wolves Hunt Sabs  
Wolverhampton  
University SU  
Wulfruna Street  
Wolverhampton

**York EF!**  
c/o York LEAF  
PO Box 323 York  
**01904 410185**

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Corporate Watch**  
Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd  
Oxford, OX4 1RQ  
01865 791391  
[mail@corporatetwatch-i-way.co.uk](mailto:mail@corporatetwatch-i-way.co.uk)  
<http://www.oneworld.org/cw/>

**Dead Trees EF!/Do or Die**  
c/o South Downs EF!

**DELTA (see LEAF above)**  
**Action Update**  
(see Manchester EF!)  
[actionupdate@gn.apc.org](mailto:actionupdate@gn.apc.org)

**Gandalf Support Campaign**  
c/o London Greenpeace  
Panther House  
38 Mount Pleasant  
London WC1X 0AP

**Making Waves**  
PO Box 13  
Ottery St Mary  
Devon EX11 1ZD  
Tel/fax: 01404 811006

**Spirit of Freedom**  
(Earth Lib. Prisoners)  
c/o BM HEAL  
London WC1N 3XX

**Head State Support**  
Group  
72 Park Road  
Worthing BN11 2AN

No Opencast

**190 Shepherds Bush Rd**  
London W6 7NL  
0171 603 1831  
fax: 0171 610 44 31

**Parents Action Network**  
Brambles Housing Co-op  
82 Andover St  
Sheffield S3 9EH  
**0114 279 7164**

**Road Alert!**  
PO Box 5544 Newbury  
Berkshire RG14 7YB  
[roadalert@gn.apc.org](mailto:roadalert@gn.apc.org)

**West Country Activist**  
c/o PO Box 426  
Bath, BA1 2ZD

## INTERNATIONAL

**ASEED Europe**  
PO Box 92066,  
1090 AB Amsterdam  
Netherlands  
00 31 20 6682236  
[aseedeur@antenna.nl](mailto:aseedeur@antenna.nl)

**Autonomous Green**  
Action POB 4721  
Station E, Ottawa  
Ontario  
Canada K1S 5H9

**Action For Social**  
Ecology  
Box 34089  
100 26 Stockholm,  
Sweden  
[ekologistena@usa.net](mailto:ekologistena@usa.net)

**Australian EF! AU PO**  
Box 12046  
Elizabeth st, Brisbane  
4002, Australia  
[ef\\_au@hotmail.com](mailto:ef_au@hotmail.com)

**Coast Mountains EF!**  
1472 Commercial Drive  
Box 128 Vancouver BC  
V5L 3X9 Canada  
**604 708 9660**

**Earth First! Journal**  
POB 1415  
Eugene OR 97440, USA  
541 344 8004  
[earthfirst@igc.apc.org](mailto:earthfirst@igc.apc.org)

**Eco-Action EF! France**  
95, rue de la Marine 62224  
Equihen-plage, France  
[eco-ction.ef.mala@wanadoo.fr](mailto:eco-ction.ef.mala@wanadoo.fr)

**Ecodefence!**  
Moskovsky prospekt  
120-34236006  
Kaliningrad/Koenigsburg  
Russia  
[ecodefence@glas.apc.org](mailto:ecodefence@glas.apc.org)

**Finland EF!**  
Viivinkatu 17 AS 17  
33610 Tampere 61  
Finland  
[ransu@sci.fi](mailto:ransu@sci.fi)  
<http://www.sci.fi/~ransu>

**FIN**  
Umweltprojektwerkstatt  
Yorkstrasse 59 HH  
10965 Berlin  
Germany  
Tel: 00 49 30 78913144  
[mprowe@ipberlin.berlinet.de](mailto:mprowe@ipberlin.berlinet.de)

**Groene Front!**  
Postbus 85069  
3508 AB Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
[ruigooord@hotmail.com](mailto:ruigooord@hotmail.com)

**An Talamh Glas/Pobal an**  
Dulra (Irish AU)

**Unit66, Liffey Trust Bldg**  
117 Upper Sheriff Street  
Dublin 1, Eire  
00353 1 855 0965  
[allenr@bluewin.ch](mailto:allenr@bluewin.ch)

**Rainbow Keepers**  
(Ukraine)  
c/o Naida Shevchenko  
Glushkova 17-22

**Kiev 252187**  
[nadia@gluk.apc.org](mailto:nadia@gluk.apc.org)  
Rainforest Information  
Center POB 368  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Australia  
066 21 85 05

**Slovakia EF!**  
A. Hlinku 11  
96001 Zvolen, Slovakia  
[kolenka@uvt.tuzov.sk](mailto:kolenka@uvt.tuzov.sk)

**Volunteers For Earth**  
Defence  
189 San Antonio Ext  
SfDM  
1105 Quezon City  
Philippines

## OTHER CONTACTS

**Advisory Service for**  
Squatters 2, St Pauls Road  
London N1 2QN  
**0171 359 8814**

**ALF Supporters Group**  
BCM Box 1160  
London WC1N 3XX

**Anarchist Black Cross**  
c/o 121 Raiton Rd  
London, SE24 0LR

**Anarchist-Primitivist**  
Network PO Box 252  
Rickmansworth, Herts  
WD3 3AY

**Anti-Fascist Action**  
BM Box 1734  
London WC1N 3XX  
**0161 232 0813**

**Birmingham Northern**  
Relief Road Campaign  
Greenwood Protest Site  
London Road  
Canwell nr Sutton  
Coldfield W Midlands  
0797 0301978

**Campaign Legal Group**  
43 Swan Meadow Rd  
Poolstock  
Wigan WN3 5BJ  
**01942 513792**

**Conscious Cinema**  
PO BOX 2679  
Brighton BN2 2EF  
**01273 278018**

**Contraflow**  
56A Info Shop  
56 Crampton St  
London SE17  
Fax: 0171 326 0353

**Counter Information**  
c/o Transmission  
28 King St  
Glasgow, G1 5QP

**Earth Circus Network**  
c/o P.O. Box 2679  
Brighton BN2 2DN  
**00378 636254**

**EarthRights**  
Battlebridge Centre  
Battlebridge Rd  
London NW1 2TL  
0171 278 1005  
[earthrights@gn.apc.org](mailto:earthrights@gn.apc.org)

**Environmental**  
Ploughshares  
Dept 126  
1 Newton St.

**Manchester M1 1HW**  
Freedom Network  
PO BOX 9384 London  
SW9 7ZB 0171 793 7343

**Genetic Engineering**  
Network (GEN)  
PO Box 9656  
London N4 4JY  
**0181 374 9516**

**Green Anarchist Network**  
BCM 1715  
London WC1N 3XX

**Hunt Saboteurs Assoc.**  
PO BOX 2786  
Brighton BN2 2AX  
**01273 628287**

[hsa@gn.apc.org](mailto:hsa@gn.apc.org)  
<http://envirolink.org/arrs/>  
[hsa.html](http://hsa.html)

**Friends of MOVE**  
P.O. Box 14129  
London W12 8GR

**Justice7/Schnews**  
PO Box 2600  
Brighton

**E. Sussex BN2 2DX**  
**01273 685913**  
<http://www.cbuzz.co.uk/SchNEWS/index.html>

**Legal Defence &**  
Monitoring Group  
BM Haven  
London, WC1N 3XX  
**0181 5337116**

**McLibel Support**  
Campaign  
5 Caledonian Rd  
London N1 9DX  
0171 713 1269  
[info@mcspotlight.org](mailto:info@mcspotlight.org)

**Menwith Womens Peace**  
Camp A59 Lay-By  
Nr. Menwith Hill Spysbase  
Harrogate, N Yorks  
**01943 468593**

**Reclaim Europe!**  
1B Waterlow Road  
London N19 5NJ  
**0171 272 9333**  
[europ@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:europ@globalnet.co.uk)

**Save the Hillgrove Cats**  
Box CB  
111 Magdalen Rd Oxford

**Squall**  
PO-Box 8959  
London N12 5HW  
**0171 561 1204**

**STROPP (Stop the Road on**  
Peaks Parnham)  
P.O. Box 162  
Grimsby  
**01472 278845**

**Third Battle of Newbury**  
PO BOX 5520  
Newbury, RG14 7YW  
**01635 45544**  
<http://www.gn.apc.org/newbury/>

**The Land is Ours**  
Box E  
111 Magdalen Road  
Oxford OX4 1RQ  
**01865 722016**

**Trident Ploughshares 2000**  
42-6 Bethel St  
Norwich  
Norfolk NR2 1NR

**Undercurrents**  
16b Cherwell St,  
Oxford OX4 1BG  
**01865 203661**  
[underc@gn.apc.org](mailto:underc@gn.apc.org)  
[www.underc.org](http://www.underc.org)

## WHAT IS EARTH FIRST!?

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or a campaign but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop, and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants. The above contacts are autonomous groups that consider themselves to share these principles. International contacts are entry points into that country's own network of groups. Other contacts are ones whose aims and principles are ones that we agree with fully or in part, or groups that we think may be of use or interest to people.

NEW ADDITIONS OR ALTERATIONS ARE SHOWN IN BOLD.